

on the lines of national permits for goods vehicles was placed before the Transport Development Council in its meeting held on 14th January, 1992. The Council recommended that a detailed scheme taking into consideration various aspects, particularly fee to be charged from tourist coaches, may be finalised by a Committee of Transport Secretaries. The Government have accordingly initiated necessary action to organize this meeting.

As the scheme is yet to be finalised, it is not possible to give details of the scheme or the time limit by which the scheme would come into operation.

SHRI PIUS TIRKEY: Sir, the hon. Minister has replied that the scheme is yet to be finalised by the Transport Development Council.

I would like to know by which time, this scheme is going to be finalised? Secondly, which are the aspects that are under consideration?

SHRI JAGADISH TYTLER: Sir, the Meeting is taking place on the 9th March in the Ministry of Surface Transport. We are going to discuss the following points. We are going to work out the details for all India Tourists Permits Scheme on the lines of the National Permits Scheme for goods carriages with simple composition fees. This will also be on the basis of a recommendation of the Tourism Ministers Conference which took place in 1991. This will also be done for avoiding checking of tourists vehicles plying under the proposed National Permits Scheme in the inter-State check-points. It is also to consider the necessity of introducing a separate and special number plate system which will enable their passage freely at the inter-State barriers. This will also determine the quantum of composition fee for national permit for tourist coaches and this will introduce a distinct token for

tourist coaches as approved by the Ministry of Tourism. This will also introduce a single point tax collection system.

SHRI PIUS TIRKEY: Is privatisation of government-owned buses also being considered?

SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER: The scheme is still to be finalised. Once the recommendation comes, then only I will be in a position to answer.

SHRI MRUTYUNJAYA NAIK: What is the percentage of total number of national permits sanctioned under the category of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes? And what is the specific number of national permits sanctioned under this category the State of Orissa?

SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER: At present I do not have the figures. I will lay it on the Table of the House.

SHRI ARVIND NETAM: Mr. Speaker Sir, Part (d) of the question is not answered in the main reply. It is not only a question of giving priority or concession. May I know from the hon. Minister whether reservation will be made with regard to national permits for Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and handicapped persons?

SHRI JAGDISH TYTLER: Sir, a Committee of Secretaries is meeting on the 9th, to finalise the modalities. Until and unless the proposals come, I cannot answer the question. But I will see to it that the hon. Member's wishes are conveyed to the Committee.

Handloom Weavers

*147. **DR. ASIM BALA:** Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have taken

any decision to supply yarn at subsidised prices to weavers

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Government have also made any policy to provide employment to weavers under the Janata Cloth Scheme;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) whether there is a mushroom growth of Powerlooms affecting the weavers adversely; and

(f) if so, the steps taken by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF TEXTILES (SHRI ASHOK GEHLOT): (a) to (f). A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT

(a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) and (d). Government is already implementing the Janata Cloth Scheme Since October 1976, with the twin objectives of providing sustained employment to the under-employed and unemployed handloom weavers and making available cloth at affordable prices to the poorer sections of the society. The current rate of subsidy provided under the scheme is Rs. 3.40 per square metre for cotton and Rs. 13.60 per square metre for woolen Janata cloth.

(e) Yes, Sir.

(f) In the context of the threats to the handloom sector, Government introduced a number of programmes and schemes, along with various kinds of organisational and fiscal interventions, in order to encourage and support the handloom industry. These steps besides laying emphasis on

arrangements for supply of raw materials, modernisation of looms, provision of technological and other inputs for improving productivity, quality and finish of handloom products also encompass protection to the handloom sector from inroads by the powerloom sector by way of reserving certain articles for exclusive production in the handloom sector. The Handlooms Reservation Act and the Orders issued thereunder have however, remained inoperative because of constant litigation in various courts, of Law. The following are the other measures taken to improve the competitiveness and marketability of handloom products:-

- (i) Assistance for setting up of Pre-loom and post-loom processing facilities;
- (ii) Assistance for modernisation of looms;
- (iii) Scheme of decentralised training to train weavers on improved technology;
- (iv) Scheme of training a cadre of 'Bunker Sevaks' for assisting weavers in transfer of improved technology;
- (v) Design support and provision of technological inputs through a number of Weavers' Service Centres in the country;
- (vi) A number of fiscal concessions to the handloom sector to remove the cost handicap of vis-a-vis the Powerlooms;
- (vii) Providing Market Development Assistance to the handloom organisations;
- (viii) Special rebate on sales of handloom goods at the National Handloom Expos;

- (ix) Assistance for setting up of marketing complexes by National and State Handloom Agencies; and
- (x) Assistance for National Design Collection Programmes for the promotion of unique weaves and designs through Exhibition-cum-sales.

DR. ASIM BALA: Sir, next to agriculture, textile sector is the biggest employer. This sector employs about 15 million people. I want to know whether the Minister has any information that for the last one year, about half of the handloom weavers are out of work due to price hike of cotton yarn and also shortage of cotton yarn. If it is so, what are the alternate projects or policies of the Government for their employment?

[Translation]

SHRI ASHOK GEHLOT: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the weavers are facing a lot of difficulties for the last few days, there cannot be two opinions about it. But we have no such figures that indicate the number of weavers who have given up their profession. It has been our constant effort to make yarn available at cheaper rates. To achieve that, I have already submitted that we have asked the N.T.C. to increase its production and have also asked the State Chief Ministers to ensure the supply of yarn at their own levels.

[English]

DR. ASIM BALA: I am not satisfied with the reply because my question is about the policy for alternate employment.

The Government is implementing a number of schemes or programmes for the development of the handloom sector and particularly for the welfare of the weavers. I

would like to know from the Minister as to what are the plans of the Government to supply cotton yarn and for marketing the finished products.

[Translation].

SHRI ASHOK GEHLOT: Sir, in the reply to the main question it has been said that the marketing arrangement is done under the Marketing Development Scheme. Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Exports are organised, the exhibitions are organised to sell the products. In this way, we make arrangements for sake of these products.

[English]

SHRI P.C. CHACKO: I am sorry to say that the answer given is not satisfactory. In reply to part (a) of the question, the Minister has stated that there is no scheme for the supply of yarn at subsidised price. The hon. Minister must be aware that there are yarn banks in all the States established by the Ministry of Textiles. One of the purposes of these yarn banks is to ensure the supply of yarn to the handloom industry at subsidised or reasonable prices. Will the hon. Minister assure the House that steps will be taken for the supply of yarn to the weavers at reasonable prices, if not at subsidised rates?

[Translation]

SHRI ASHOK GEHLOT: Mr. Speaker, Sir, what the hon. Member has said is right. Previously this scheme was in operation, now it has been withdrawn. Still we are making our best efforts for the supply of yarn at cheaper rates. We have also discussed the matter with private yarn suppliers to supply yarn at reasonable rate.

SHRI RAJHENDRA AGNIHOTRI: Mr. Speaker, Sir, my question is that the employees working in the mills of the National Textiles Corporation in Uttar Pradesh, which

are virtually closed, have not been paid their arrears. Will the hon. Minister be pleased to tell me whether the interest on the arrear amount up to the period the payment is made would be given to them?

[*English*]

MR. SPEAKER: it is very difficult. They do not understand that it is not relevant to the main question, if you can reply, please do so.

[*Translation*]

SHRI ASHOK GEHLOT: Mr. Speaker, Sir, what the hon. Member has asked relates to N.T.C. and the question relates to weavers.

SHRI GEORGE FERNANDES: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am very much perturbed by the reply given by the hon. Minister. On the one hand, he says that he has no information about the number of weavers who are unemployed at present. There are one and a half crore weavers in the country and he does not know how many of them are jobless. Secondly, he has said that Government does not have any plan in hand to solve the the problem. I would like to know two concrete things from the hon. Minister. First, the subsidy that was to be given to the States for making Janta Cloth could not be made available in time resulting in joblessness among weavers in many parts of the country. Will the Government take steps to make the subsidy available immediately. So far as the sale of cloth and co-operatives are concerned, it is all right. My second question is whether the Government is prepared to take a decision to ask the Central Government and all its offices, all establishments, all the State Governments, their offices and their establishments and local bodies to buy cloth woven by weavers on priority basis?

SHRI ASHOK GEHLOT: Mr. Speaker,

Sir, I would like to tell the hon. Member that after monitoring the subsidy, we try to make sure that it reaches in time. Till the final accounts are not received, we are not in a position to give it. Even then we shall try that the subsidy should reach in time.

The other suggestion is good. We have now taken some steps in this direction and have written to all the Ministries that they should give priority to handloom sector because I release this fact that unless alongwith increase in the production of handloom cloth people develop a sense of attachment for it. Like Khadi the hardship faced by than one and a half crore weavers, towards which the hon. Member has drawn our attention will continue. It is difficult to collect the figures about the number of unemployed, because they do this work but later they shift to some other work. I would like to say that the Railway Ministry and the Industries is Ministry have accepted this fact that in future we shall give priority to handloom cloth. We are trying to persuade the other Ministries also to give priority to the handloom cloth.

SHRI SANDIPAN BHAWAN THORAT: Mr. Speaker, Sir, we have just been told that there are more than 1-1/2 crore weavers, who mainly belong to the weaker sections, the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. They are supplied yarn through spinning mills, and these spinning mills do not get cotton at cheap rates. This is the reason that price of yarn goes up. I would like to ask the hon. Minister whether there are such co-operative spinning mills in our country and whether Government propose to formulate any scheme to supply cotton at cheaper rates to these mills?

SHRI ASHOK GEHLOT: Co-operative mills have also to buy it from the open market. There is no separate arrangement for that.